Full-Time Kindergarten: A New Day for the Young Children of Montana

Montana Full-Time Kindergarten Conference Helena, Montana

> Sharon Lynn Kagan, Ed.D. August 10, 2007

Presentation Overview

- Part I: Welcome to Full-Time Kindergarten
- Part II: History
- Part III: Full-Time Kindergarten Today
- Part IV: General Benefits, Concrete Child Effects
- Part V: Recommendations

Part I: Welcome to Full-Time Kindergarten



"There will be families all over Montana for a generation to come who will thank those of you who brought full-time, all-day kindergarten to Montana...Twenty-five years from now, our children entering the workplace will be better teachers, better doctors, better lawyers, and better farmers."

- Governor Brian Schweitzer

"I started off very leery of full-day kindergarten...I thought we'd have kids here crying in the afternoon...[but now] I see our kindergarteners skipping down the halls. They love school. They're entering first grade with confidence I've never seen before, reading at second grade levels...[Full-time kindergarten] is something I would fight for."

- Terrie Alger, Kindergarten teacher at Pablo Elementary

On May 17, 2007, the Montana legislature and Governor Brian Schweitzer agreed that



full-time kindergarten is worth fighting for.

The legislature passed Senate Bill 2, revolutionizing kindergarten in Montana.

But what does "full-time" really mean and what do we know about it nationally?

As a result of this new legislation, what does it entail in Montana?

And where does Montana fit in with other states?

What Does Full-Time Kindergarten Really Mean?

- No widely held definition:
 - U.S. Census Bureau: morning and noon sessions for at least 5 days per week
 - As of 2005, only 18 states provided specific statutory definitions:
 - 12 measure by hours per day (range: 4-6.5)
 - 6 measure by hours per year (range: 720-1,050)
 - Statutory definitions are very important for comparing policies, programs, and outcomes

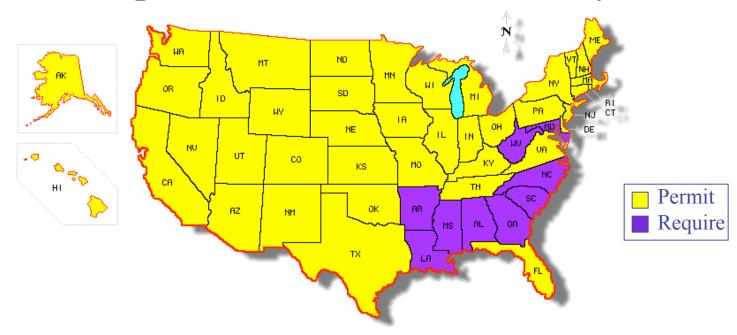
Highly variable funding:

- At the national level:
 - Title I funding for low-income students, only
- At the state level: categorical programs
 - Targeted funding for districts that have never offered full-day (3 states)
 - Targeted funding for at-risk students (7 states)
 - Targeted funding to increase access to full-day (1 state)

Source: Kauerz, K. (2005). Full-day kindergarten: A study of state policies in the United States. Denver: Education Commission of the States.

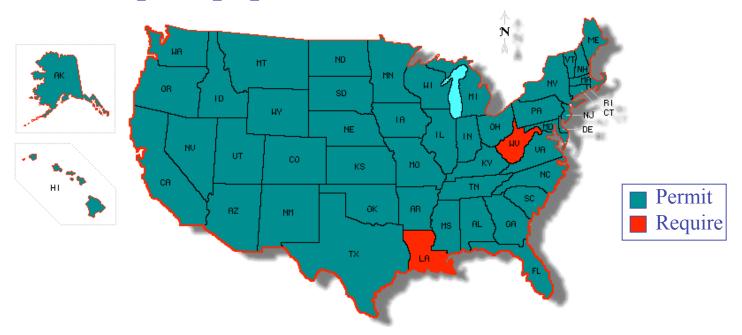
- Highly variable access:
 - At the national level:
 - Offered in more schools with high low-income and minority concentrations
 - At the regional level:
 - Offered by 84% of public schools in the South, 57% in the Midwest, 38% in the West, and 37% in the Northeast
 - At the state level:
 - Great variation according to state and district policy

- At the state level:
 - 41 states *permit* districts to offer full-day, and 9 states *require* that districts offer full-day:



Source: Kauerz, K. (2005). Full-day kindergarten: A study of state policies in the United States. Denver: Education Commission of the States.

- At the state level:
 - Of the 9 states that require full-day to be offered, 2 states require pupils to attend:

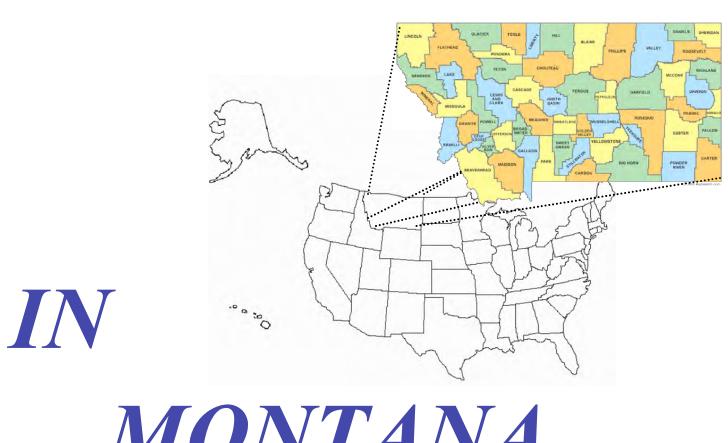


Source: Kauerz, K. (2005). Full-day kindergarten: A study of state policies in the United States. Denver: Education Commission of the States.

Though most states view full-day kindergarten as optional, school districts and parents support it: more than half of all kindergarteners are currently enrolled in full-day programs.

Source: Child Trends Data Bank. (n.d.). Full-day kindergarten. Available: http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/102Fulldaykindergarten.cfm.

Where Does Montana Fit In?



MONTANA...

What Does Full-Time Entail in Montana?

- Full-time kindergarten newly defined in Montana statute:
 - "720 or more aggregate hours of pupil instruction per school year"
 - Uses hours per year format like 6 other states
 - Identical to the definition adopted by the state of Florida
 - Equal to Montana's requirement for grades 1-3
 - "an integral part of the elementary school [that]
 must be financed and governed accordingly"

Sources: Stand Up for Education. (2007). "Victory for Children: full-time kindergarten passes." Retrieved July 19, 2007 from http://www.standupmontana.org/ftk.htm. National Governors Association. (2007). Montana approves full-day kindergarten, loan assistance for teachers. Retrieved July 19, 2007 from http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440 http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/specsess/0507/billpdf/SB0002.pdf.

What Does Full-Time Entail in Montana?

- The 2007 "victory for children":
 - \$28 million funding increase from the state to school districts that choose to offer full-day
 - \$10 million in one-time-only startup funds
 - Shift in full-time K funding policy
 - Full-time funding is now twice as much as half-day *and* equal to than 1st grade
 - Montana now joins 7 other states in providing strong incentives for full-time kindergarten

Sources: Stand Up for Education. (2007). "Victory for Children: full-time kindergarten passes." Retrieved July 19, 2007 from http://www.standupmontana.org/ftk.htm. Kauerz, K. (2005). Full-day kindergarten: A study of state policies in the United States. Denver: Education Commission of the States. T. Jensen. Personal Communication. July 26, 2007.

What Does Full-Time Entail in Montana?

- Voluntary, universally available programming
 - "capable of accommodating, at a minimum, all the children in the district who will be 5 years old"
 - Goal: rapid expansion from 25% of all kindergarteners
 - Since the full-day bill was passed in May, the number of eligible school districts planning to offer full-time K has more than doubled to 182 out of 328—more than half the districts in the state

Sources: Stand Up for Education. (2007). "Victory for Children: full-time kindergarten passes." Retrieved July 19, 2007 from http://www.standupmontana.org/ftk.htm. National Governors Association. (2007). Montana approves full-day kindergarten, loan assistance for teachers. Retrieved July 19, 2007 from http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440 http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440 http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440 http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440 http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440 http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/specsess/0507/billpdf/SB0002.pdf. T. Jensen. Personal Communication. July 26, 2007.

Welcome to Full-Time Kindergarten

Montana is really capitalizing on the research,

lessons from prior state programs, the depth and breadth of its teachers and educational leadership,

and

the history of full-day kindergarten.

Part II: History

The Origins of Kindergarten

- Friedrich Froebel and the "children's garden":
 - Founded in 1837
 - Served children ages 3 to 7
 - Pre-academic and self-directed
 - Focus: to nurture the whole child (mental, social, emotional development) through play, music, movement, interaction with surroundings, and independent and creative exploration

The Origins of Kindergarten

- Kindergarten in the US:
 - Began in 1857 with the first Froebelian program in Wisconsin
 - Private, German-speaking
 - Full-day
 - Public programs begin in the 1870s as full-day
 - Nation-wide expansion between 1890 and 1910
 - *Shift in focus*: inculcation of cultural values and norms
 - Same vehicle: self-directed play

The Origins of Kindergarten

In Germany, in the United States, and around the world, kindergarten has historically been full-day.

From Full-Day to Half-Day

- Impact of US entry into World War II:
 - Need for wartime labor draws women into the labor force
 - Teacher cut-backs transform kindergarten
 - Following the War, early Baby Boomers glutted kindergarten programs, necessitating half-day programs because of time and space constraints
 - By the 1950s, nearly all kindergarten programs were half-day

The Return to Full-Day

- By the 1960s-70s, the pendulum swings back:
 - Sputnik and push for educational reform
 - Early childhood programming as "catch up" for atrisk children (e.g., Head Start)
 - Shift in focus: cognitive development and academic preparation
 - Rise in dual-earner and single-parents households expands the middle class interest in full-day programs

Source: DeCicca, P. (2005). Does full-day kindergarten matter? Evidence from the first two years of schooling. Economics of Education Review, 26, 67-82. Lee, V. E., Burkam, D. T., Ready, D. D., Honigman, J., & Meisels, S. J. (2006). Full-day versus half-day kindergarten: In which program do children learn more? American Journal of Education, 112(2), 164-208.

The Proliferation of Full-Day

- Flood of 1990s state initiatives due to changing demographic and social forces:
 - Majority of mothers of young children now work
 - Declining non-K school enrollments free up space
 - Rise of preschool and new conceptions of school entry
 - New research on brain development
 - Economic concerns and investment in human capital

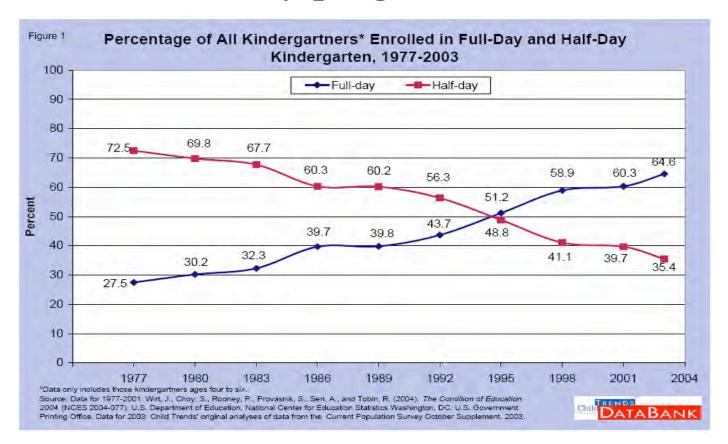
The Proliferation of Full-Day

With 2.4 million children enrolled in all 50 states, today, full-day kindergarten is <u>highly</u> prevalent.

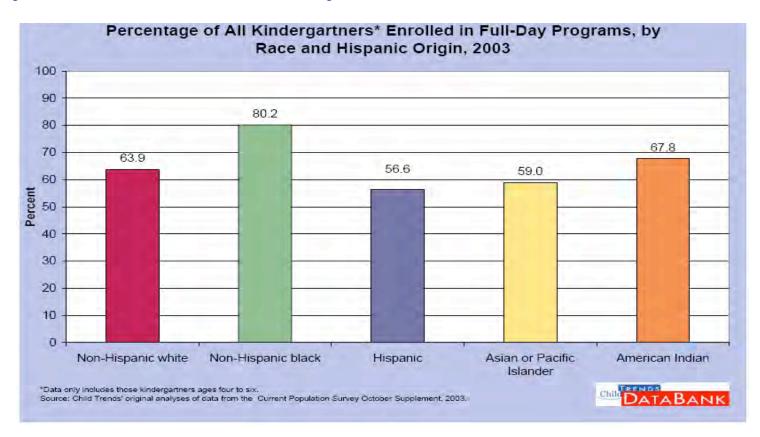
Source: Child Trends Data Bank. (n.d.). Full-day kindergarten. Available: http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/102Fulldaykindergarten.cfm. U.S. Census Bureau. School Enrollment in 2003: Population Profile of the United States. (2005). http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/dynamic/schoolenrollment.pdf#search='School%20Enrollment%20in%202003

Part III: Full-Time Kindergarten Today

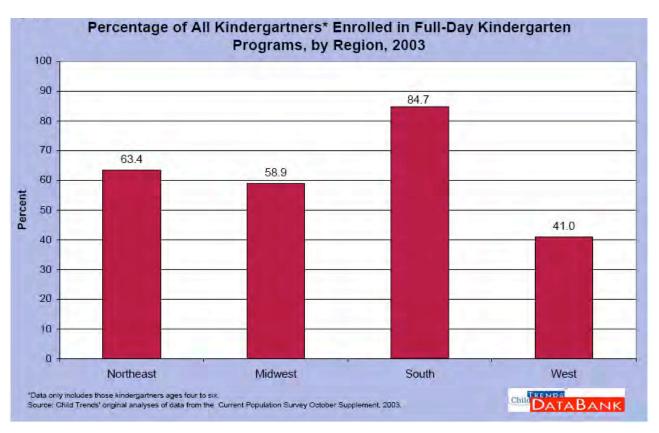
• As of 2003, 65% of all kindergarteners were enrolled in full-day programs.



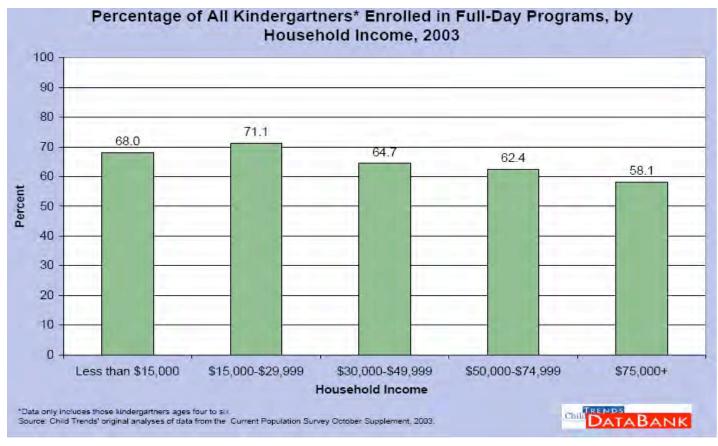
• Enrollment in full-day programs is conditioned by race and ethnicity.



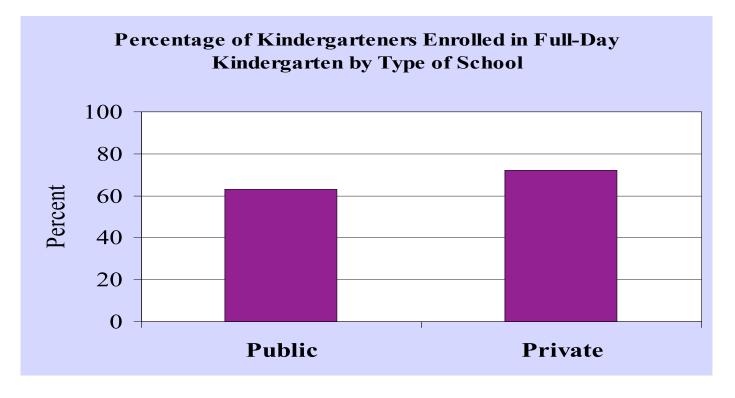
 Enrollment in full-day programs is conditioned by region.



• Enrollment in full-day programs is conditioned by family income.



 Enrollment in full-day programs is conditioned by type of school.



Source: Child Trends Data Bank. (n.d.). Full-day kindergarten. Available: http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/102Fulldaykindergarten.cfm.

Despite their uneven dispersal, full-day kindergarten programs are recognized as

valuable

in diverse school districts and states across the country.

Teachers, administrators, and parents increasing agree with Billings high school English and reading teacher, Rod Gottula:



"As an educator and a parent of two young children, I do not want my son and daughter denied the opportunity of full-day kindergarten."

Part IV: General Benefits, Concrete Child Effects

What are Benefits and Effects?

- Full-time kindergarten yields two different types of advantages:
 - <u>General benefits</u>: accrue to teachers and classrooms and enhance opportunities for learning
 - Concrete child effects: refer to concrete
 outcomes for children which can be short-term and long-term

Benefits of Full-Time Kindergarten

- Montana already knows the great benefits of full-day kindergarten:
 - Continuity for children accustomed to full-day preschool and/or bound for full-time 1st grade
 - Greater opportunity for schools to align learning standards, curriculum, and assessments
 - More time for teachers to foster both formal and informal learning opportunities

Benefits: Use of Extra Time

- The full-day classroom affords twice as much time for learning:
 - Students and teachers are more likely to work on a full range of academic subjects every day:
 - Reading
 - Math
 - Social studies
 - Science



Teachers spend more time on literacy and math

Sources: Ackerman, S. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER. National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) Full-day and half-day kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, kindergarten class of 1998-99. Retrieved June 14, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/web/2004078.asp.

Benefits: Classroom Differences

- The full-day classroom is fundamentally more conducive to learning than the half-day classroom:
 - Less time in teacher-directed large groups
 - More time for teachers to focus on individual learning

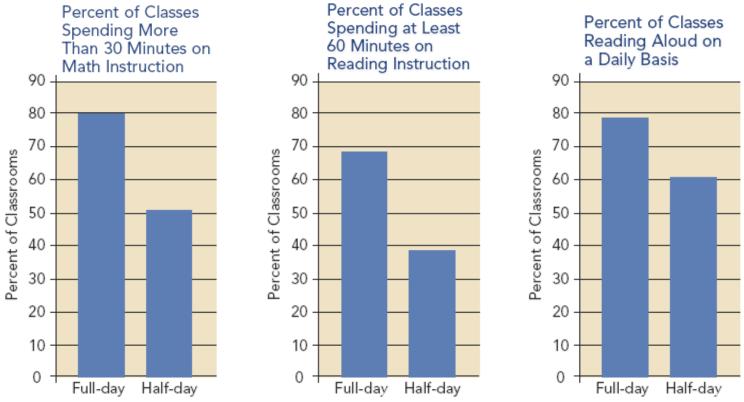


- More time for children to self-select activities that foster long-term learning
- More time and flexibility in elaborating on each activity and skill

Sources: Ackerman, S. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER. National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) Full-day and half-day kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, kindergarten class of 1998-99. Retrieved June 14, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/web/2004078.asp. WestEd. (2005). Full-day kindergarten: Expanding Learning Opportunities [Policy Brief]. San Francisco: Author.

Benefits: Use of Extra Time

What's possible for full-day teachers is truly remarkable:



Sources: Ackerman, S. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER.

Benefits: Use of Extra Time

"This is the first year full-time kindergarten students have rotated into my music classes. I'm able to do so much more. [The children] are more academically prepared. Their focus and attention span are greatly improved, and I think it's because of this program."

- Kathy Briny, Pablo Elementary School music teacher





Child Effects: Short-Term

- For children, full-day programs "outshine" half-day in *cognitive gains*:
 - More learning and higher assessment scores in both reading and math
 - Reducing the achievement gap: increased benefits for low-income and minority children
 - Higher report-card grades in literacy, math, general learning skills, and behavior

Sources: Ackerman, S. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER. National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) Full-day and half-day kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, kindergarten class of 1998-99. Retrieved June 14, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/web/2004078.asp.

Child Effects: Short-Term

- For children, full-day programs "outshine" half-day in *social and behavioral gains*:
 - Positive gains in independent learning,
 involvement in classroom activities, approach to teacher
 - Higher report-card grades in social skills
 - Less kindergarten-year retention
 - Greater parent and teacher satisfaction

Sources: Ackerman, S. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER. Lee, V. E., Burkam, D. T., Ready, D. D., Honigman, J., & Meisels, S. J. (2006). Full-day versus half-day kindergarten: In which program do children learn more? American Journal of Education, 112(2), 164-208. National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) Full-day and half-day kindergarten in the United States: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, kindergarten class of 1998-99. Retrieved June 14, 2007 from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/web/2004078.asp.

Child Effects: Long-Term

- Some research shows that the benefits of fullday fade over time:
 - According to one national study, summer fallback and fade-out diminish the cognitive gains accrued by full-day K:
 - Gains for black children disappeared by the start of 1st grade
 - Gains for Hispanic children disappeared by the end of 1st grade
 - Gains for white children diminished significantly

Sources: Ackerman, S. J., Barnett, W. S., & Robin, K. B. (2005). Making the most of kindergarten: Present trends and future issues in the provision of full-day programs. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER.. DeCicca, P. (2005). Does full-day kindergarten matter? Evidence from the first two years of schooling. Economics of Education Review, 26, 67-82.

Child Effects: Long-Term

- Other research shows that the benefits of fullday programs persist:
 - A study of one large Midwestern school district found positive outcomes among second-graders who had attended full-day K:
 - Higher math and reading scores on achievement tests
 - Less in-grade retention through elementary school
 - Fewer school absences

Summary of Concrete Child Effects

While the short-term effects of full-day programs are *universally positive*, long-term outcomes appear *mixed*.

Numerous researchers cite the need for more long-term analysis of full-day K.



Part V: Recommendations

Recommendations

- Because Montana is a local-control state, district administrators and teachers have a great stake in the success of full-time K.
 - 1. Choose Appropriate Content
 - 2. Remember Your Students' Needs
 - 3. Assess Children Continuously and Use the Data to Improve Instruction
 - 4. Involve Parents
 - 5. Be Fair and Equitable
 - 6. Look to the Future

Choose Appropriate Content

- Prevent the "push-down" of academic instruction with developmentally appropriate curricula:
 - "As children are not miniature adults, kindergarten is not miniature school."
 - "Kindergarten must prioritize the teaching and nurturing of *children*, not the teaching of *content*."
 - Capitalize on the extra time afforded by full-time programming—but don't forget play

Choose Appropriate Content

- Place kindergarten in the larger early childhood continuum:
 - *Horizontal alignment*: Synchronization among standards, assessments, and curricula *within* a given age level (e.g., Kindergarten).
 - Vertical alignment: Synchronization among standards, assessments, and curricula between given age levels (e.g., Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1st grade).

Remember Your Students' Needs

- Tailor pedagogy to the needs of 5- and 6-yearolds:
 - "How young children are taught is difficult to separate from what they are taught."
 - Nurture all domains of child development (physical health and motor development, social and emotional development, language development, cognitive development, approaches toward learning)
 - Foster opportunities for communication among students' past and future teachers to fight fade-out

Source: Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2006). Making the most of kindergarten--trends and policy issues. In Dominic F. Gullo, K today: Teaching and learning in the kindergarten year (p. 165).

Remember Your Students' Needs

"Kindergarten children need to play; they need to move. In half-day programs, those things were pushed aside because of the focus on academics. Writing and fine motor skills are not development when children don't have time to play with play-dough and beads."



- Joan Howell, full-time kindergarten teacher at Pablo Elementary

Assess Children Continuously and Use Data to Improve Instruction

- Recognize that young children are episodic learners:
 - They learn and forget and re-learn
 - An assessment at one point in time is not durably accurate
- Perform <u>INFORMAL</u> assessments frequently:
 - Assessments need to be done in the natural setting
 - Assessments should be done by familiar adults
- Use data to tailor instruction

Involve Parents

- Parents are children's first teachers, and they must be involved in the early education effort:
 - Encourage parent volunteers in the classroom
 - Communicate frequently with parents to create a seamless network of care and education for kids



 Governor Brian Schweitzer: "It isn't necessarily more money in education that improves an outcome, but I can guarantee you more parent involvement always improves the outcome."

Be Fair and Equitable

- Focus full-time kindergarten on *all* children:
 - Understand and plan for racially disproportionate effects of summer fallback and fade-out (e.g., summer programming)
 - Create inclusive classrooms
 - Institute bilingual education across programs, not just for English Language Learners
 - Support physical and mental health

Source: Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2006). Making the most of kindergarten--trends and policy issues. In Dominic F. Gullo, K today: Teaching and learning in the kindergarten year (p. 166). DeCicca, P. (2005). Does full-day kindergarten matter? Evidence from the first two years of schooling. Economics of Education Review, 26, 67-82.

Look to the Future

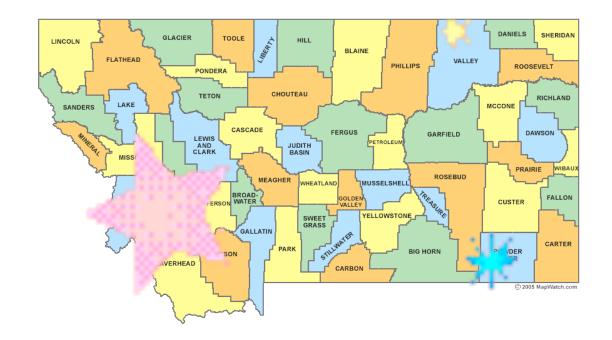
- Continually assess and revise the practice of full-time K:
 - Conception and format of kindergarten programs
 - In pacing and sequencing, *not* equal to two half-days
 - Standards, curriculum, and assessment
 - Foster knowledge and skills necessary for contemporary society (i.e., technological literacy)
 - Monitor developments in preschool and the early elementary grades
 - Build sustainable relationships between families, communities, and schools

Source: Kagan, S. L. & Kauerz, K. (2006). Making the most of kindergarten--trends and policy issues. In Dominic F. Gullo, K today: Teaching and learning in the kindergarten year (p. 166).

A New Day

"After teaching full time kindergarten for three years, I would not consider going back to teaching half day sessions. My students are so much more grounded, flexible, confident, and prepared when they enter first grade. In three years, I have not had a child who could not handle the full day. Parents have been very supportive and satisfied."

- Coleene Torgerson, Bigfork teacher for 22 years, kindergarten teacher for 17 years, full-time kindergarten teacher for 3 years



Good Luck and Hooray, Montana!